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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 27 July 2016		2. REPORT TYPE Briefing Charts		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) 01 July 2016 - 27 July 2016	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Large Eddy Simulations of Transverse Combustion Instability in a Multi-Element Injector				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Matthew Harvazinski, Yogin Desai, Douglas Talley, Venke Sankaran				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER Q0YA	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air Force Research Laboratory (AFMC) AFRL/RQRC 10 E. Saturn Blvd. Edwards AFB, CA 93524-7680				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NO.	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air Force Research Laboratory (AFMC) AFRL/RQR 5 Pollux Drive Edwards AFB, CA 93524-7048				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) AFRL-RQ-ED-VG-2016-218	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited. The U.S. Government is joint author of the work and has the right to use, modify, reproduce, release, perform, display, or disclose the work.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES For presentation at AIAA Propulsion and Energy Forum; Salt Lake City, UT (25-27 July 2016) PA Case Number: #16346; Clearance Date: 7/21/2016 Prepared in collaboration with HyPerComp Inc					
14. ABSTRACT Viewgraph/Briefing Charts					
15. SUBJECT TERMS N/A					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  SAR	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  34	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON D. Talley
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NO (include area code) N/A



# Large Eddy Simulations of Transverse Combustion Instability in a Multi-Element Injector



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Talley<sup>1</sup>, Venke Sankaran<sup>1</sup>**

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# History



Combustion instability is an organized oscillatory motion in a combustion chamber sustained by combustion.

CI caused a four year delay in the development of the F-1 engine used in the Apollo program

- > 2000 full scale tests
- > \$400 million for propellants alone (2010 prices)

Irreparable damage can occur in less than 1 second.



Damaged engine injector faceplate caused by combustion instability

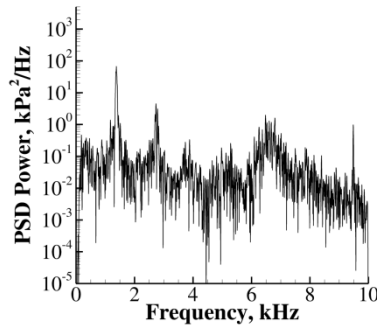
“Combustion instabilities have been observed in almost every engine development effort, including even the most recent development programs”

– JANNAF Stability Panel Draft (2010)

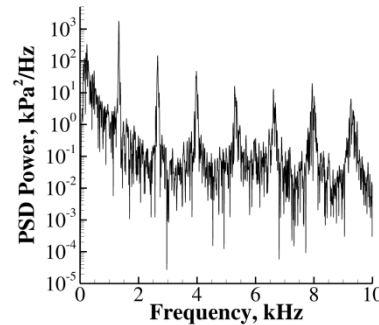


# Single Element Studies

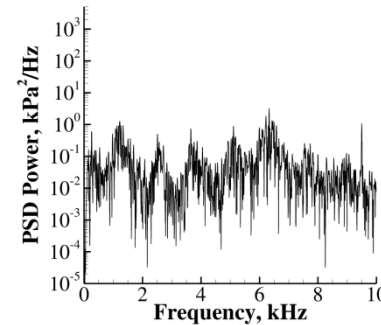
Short Post  
Marginally Stable



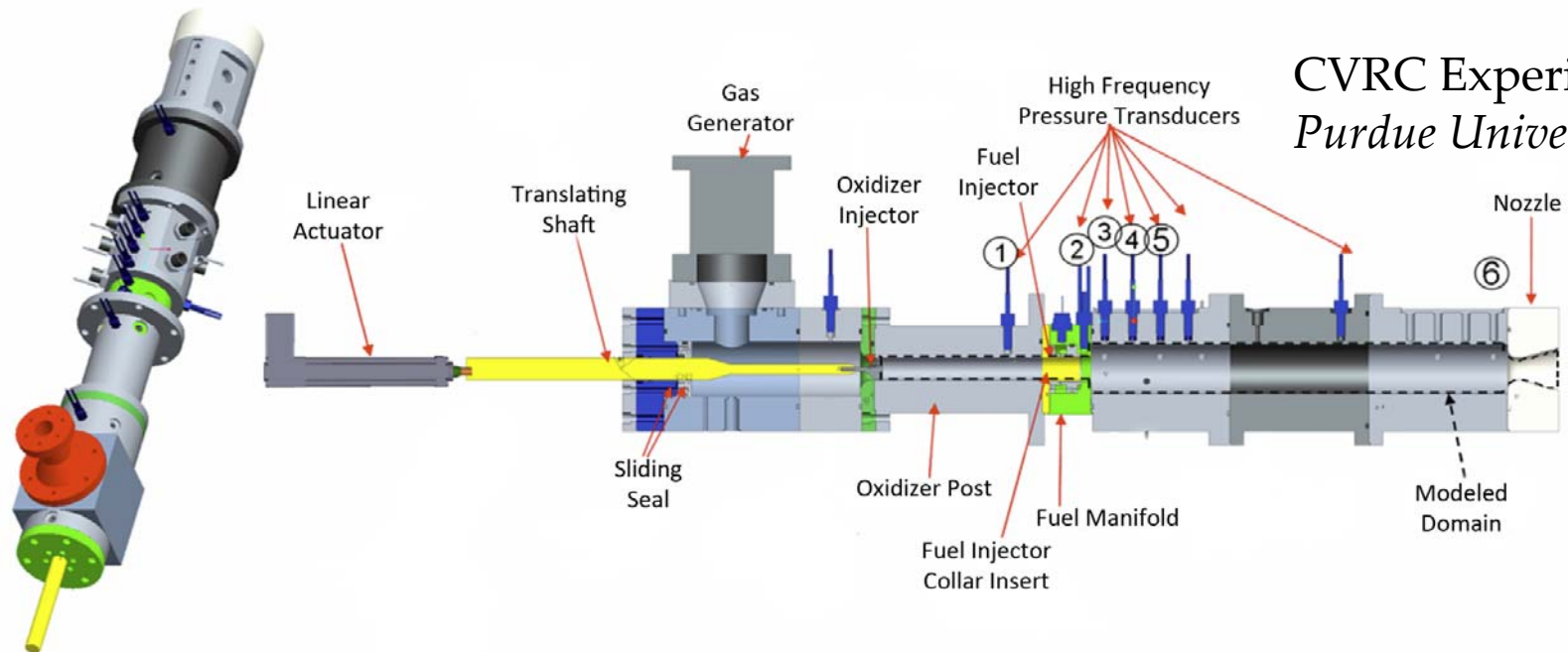
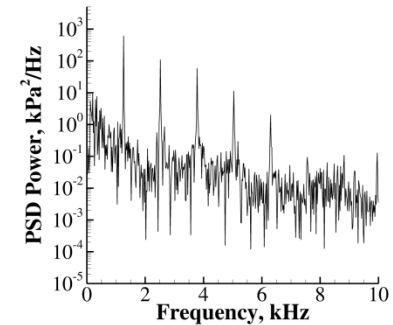
Intermediate Post  
Unstable



Long Post  
Stable



Long Post  
Unstable



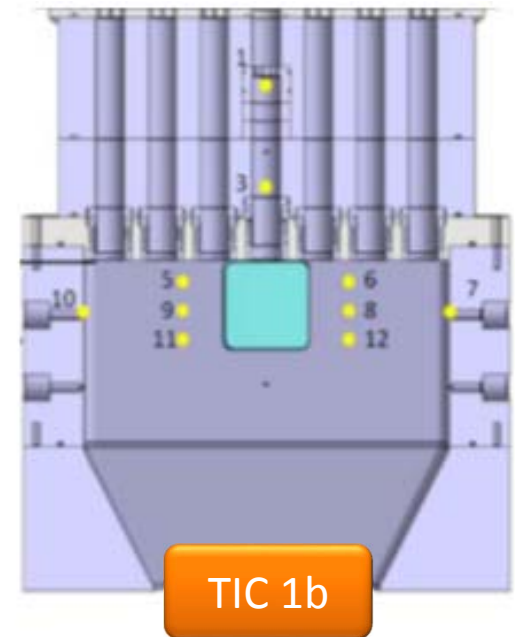
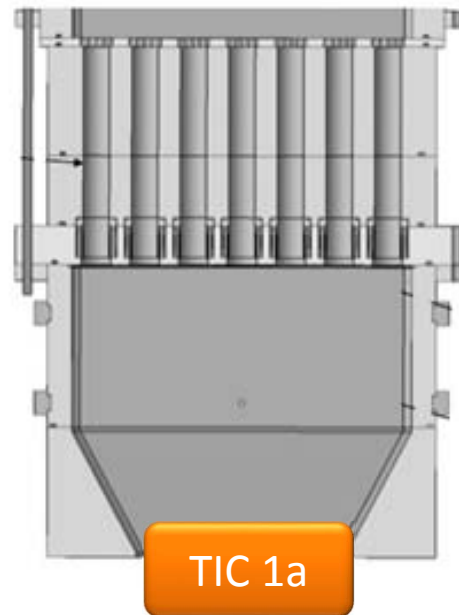
CVRC Experiment  
Purdue University



# Transverse Instability Combustor



- Transverse Instability Combustor – TIC
- Experimental rig developed at Purdue University
- Four major iterations to date
- Rectangular chamber with 7 elements
- Linear array of 7 elements
- Injectors are similar to the single element work
- Instability is self-excited





# Single & Multi-element Studies



## Single Element

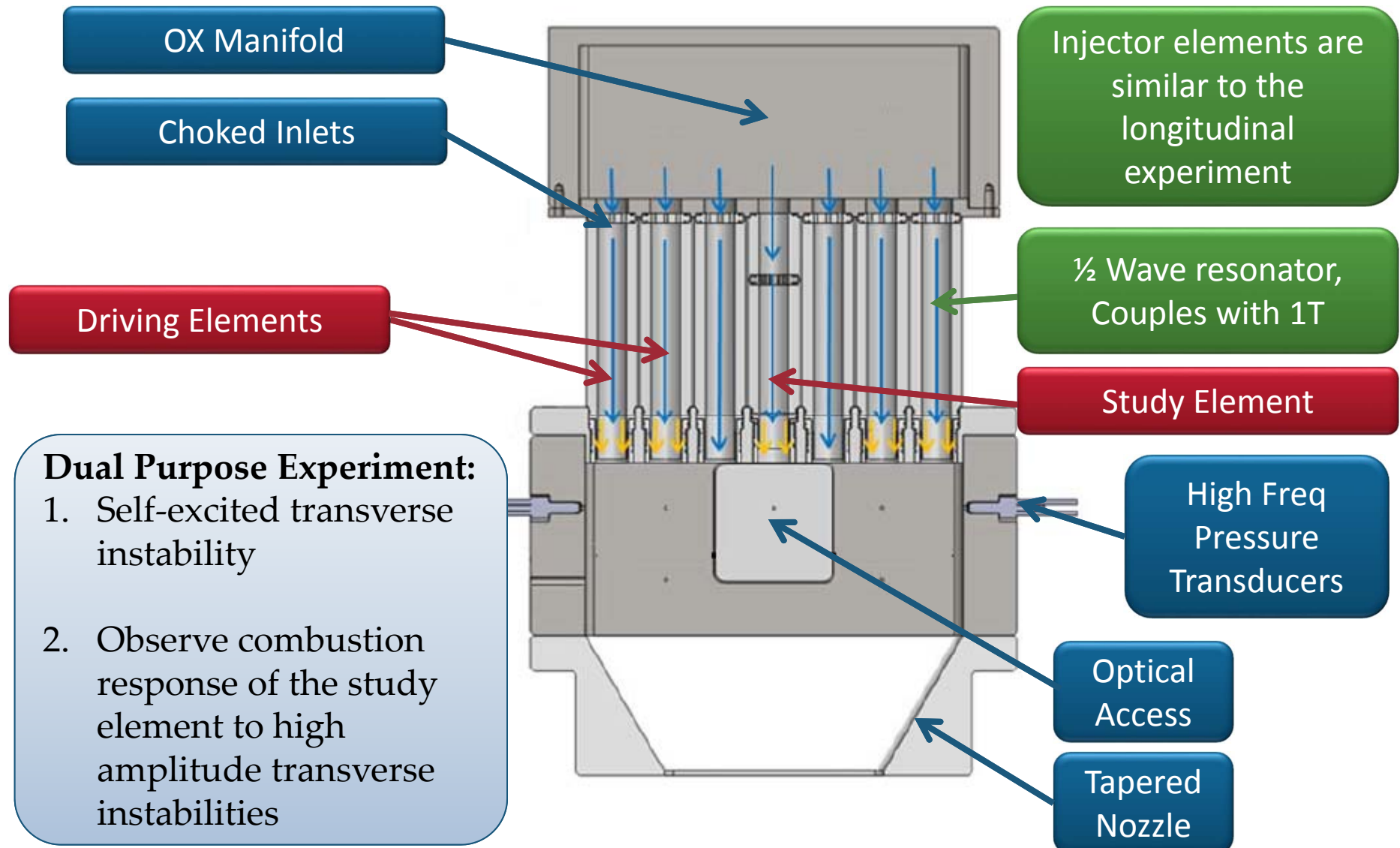
- Less expensive
- Smaller domains
- Substantial work published
- Wall effect is exaggerated

## Multi-element

- More expensive
- Larger domains
- Complex geometries
- Less literature, limited work
- Captures inter-element interactions



# TIC Configuration







# TIC Experiments

		TIC 1a	TIC 1b	TIC 1c	TIC 1d
Oxidizer		H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>
Fuel	Driving	JP-8	RP-1	CH <sub>4</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>
	Study	C <sub>12</sub> H <sub>26</sub>	C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>6</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>
Oxidizer Inlet	Driving	Perforated Plate	Perforated Plate	Perforated Plate	Choked Venturi
	Study	Perforated Plate	Choked Slots	Choked Slots	Choked Venturi
Notes		Two-phase flow		Multiple study ox-post lengths considered	Multiple ox-post lengths considered
Companion Simulations			3-element	3 & 7-element	

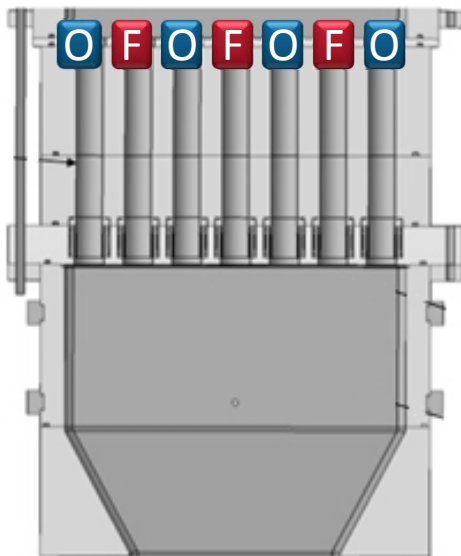
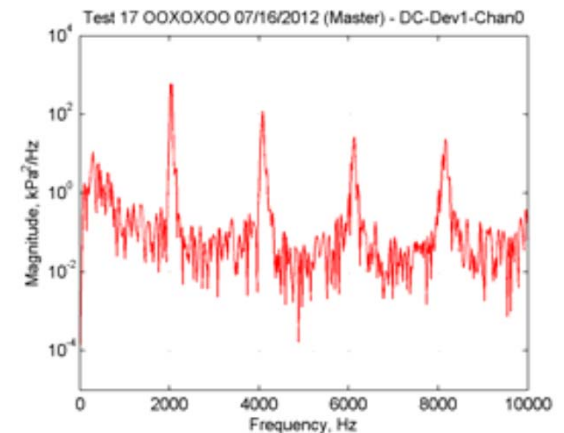
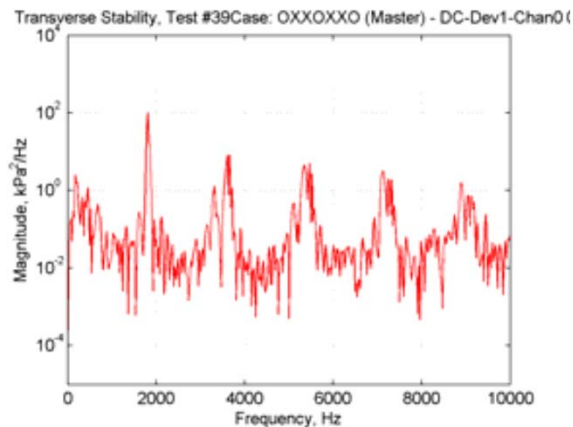
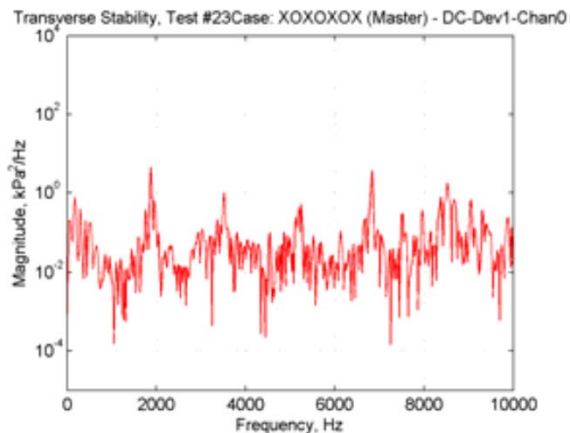


*This  
Study*

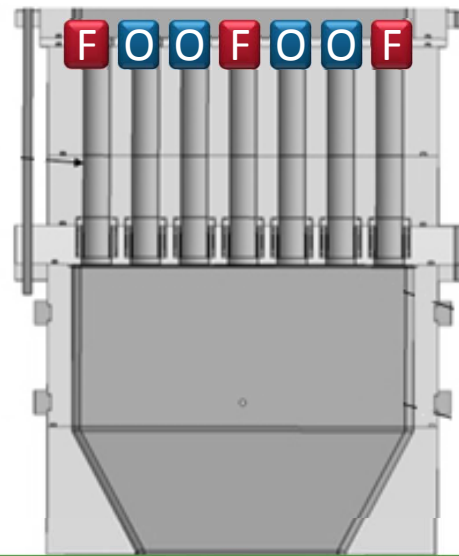




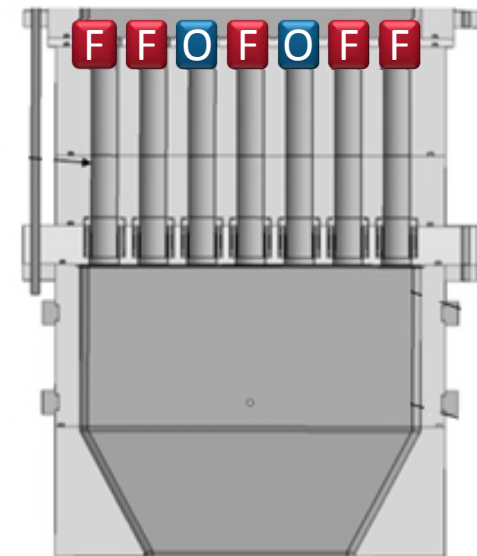
# Amplitude Control – TIC 1a&b



**F** - Fuel & Oxidizer  
**O** - Oxidizer Only



Increasing Amplitude



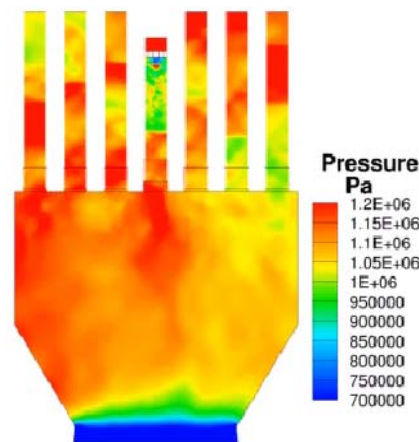


# Two Distinct Modeling Approaches



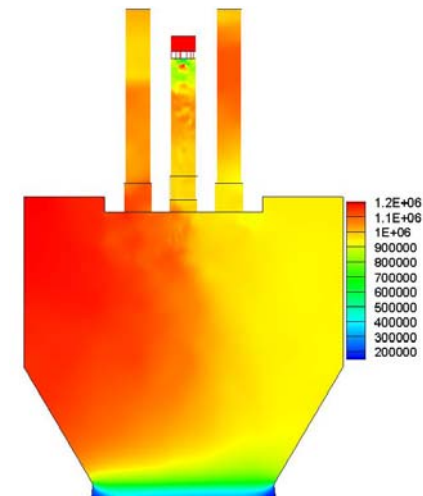
## Full Simulation

- Captures self-excited instability
- Captures inter-element interactions
- Amplitude is difficult to control
- Expensive



## Reduced Model

- Does not capture driving
- Limited inter-element interactions
- Amplitude is prescribed
- Low cost





# Test Configurations

	Configuration 1	Configuration 4
	Unstable	Stable
Injector Setup	<b>F F O F O F F</b>	<b>O F O F O F O</b>
$p'$ (% $p_c$ )	65	8
$p'$ , kPa	620	70
1W Frequency, Hz	2032	1855

Outer driving injectors flow RP1,  
center study element flows  $C_2H_6$

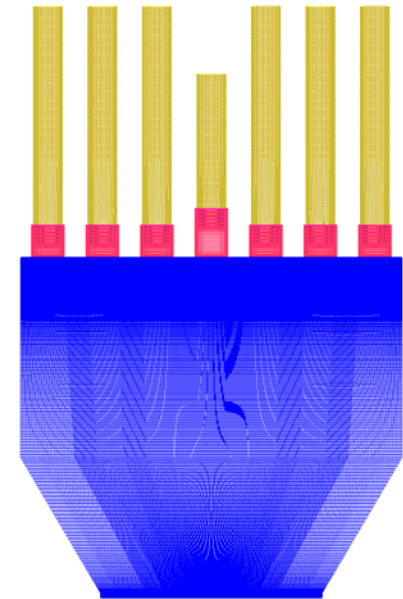
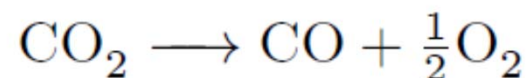
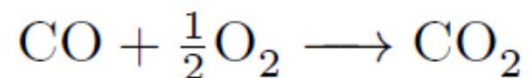
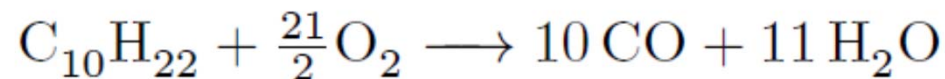
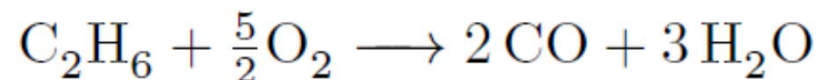
Oxidizer is decomposed hydrogen  
peroxide, 58%  $H_2O$ , 42%  $O_2$

	Temp., K	Mass Flow, kg/s
Oxidizer	1029	0.196
RP1	298	0.033
$C_2H_6$	319	0.025



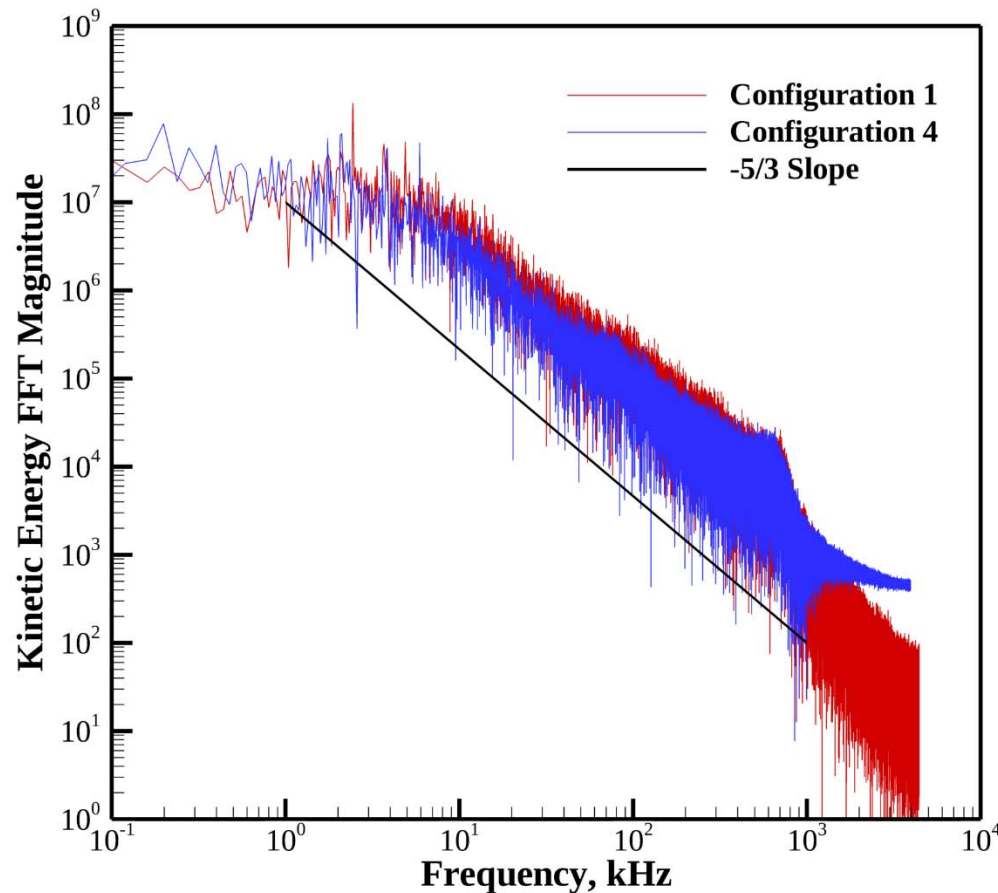
# Simulation Details

- Multi-block structured mesh, 15.63 M
- LESLIE – reacting flow LES code
- RP1 is modeled as  $C_{10}H_{22}$
- Specified mass flow inlets (reflecting)
- Finite rate kinetics





# Turbulent Spectrum

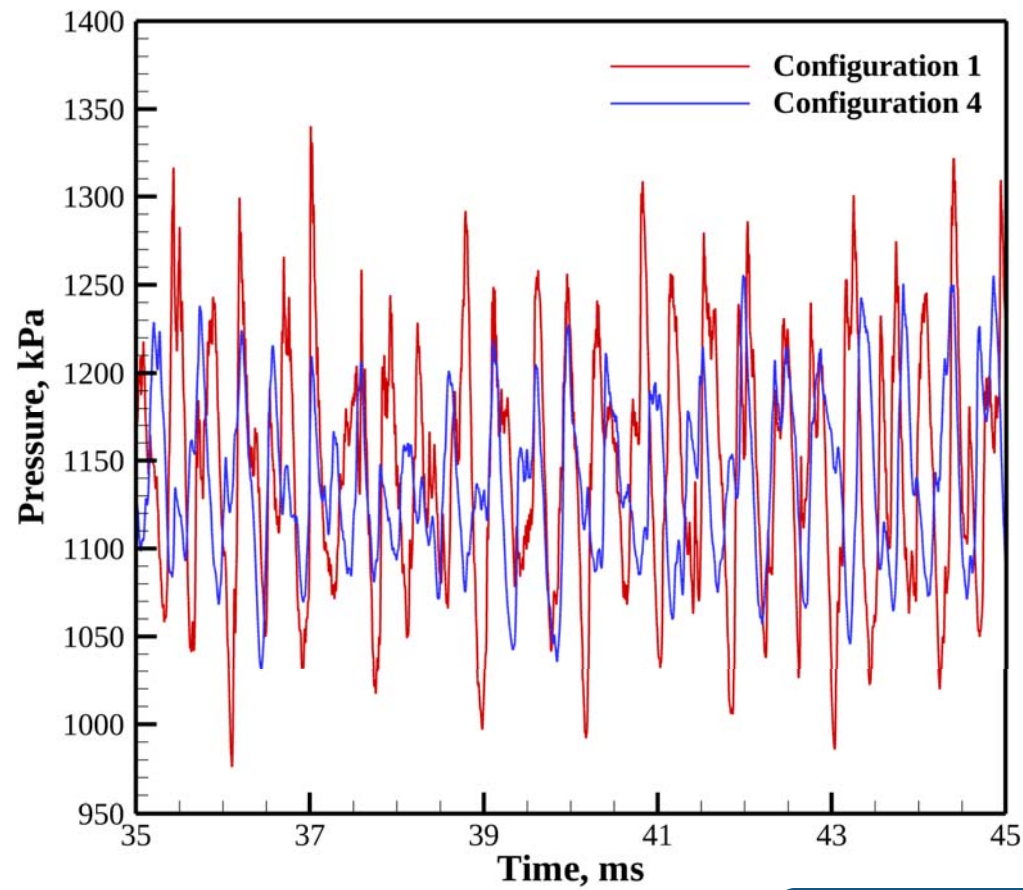


The KE spectrum is used to help assess the grid resolution

Good Agreement with the -5/3 slope for both cases



# Side Wall, Pressure



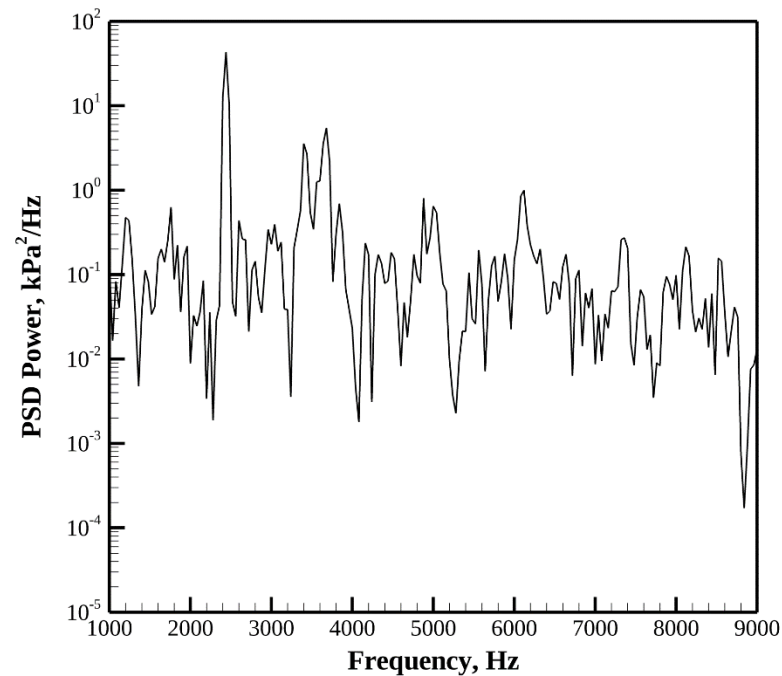
Similar amplitudes



# Side Wall, PSD

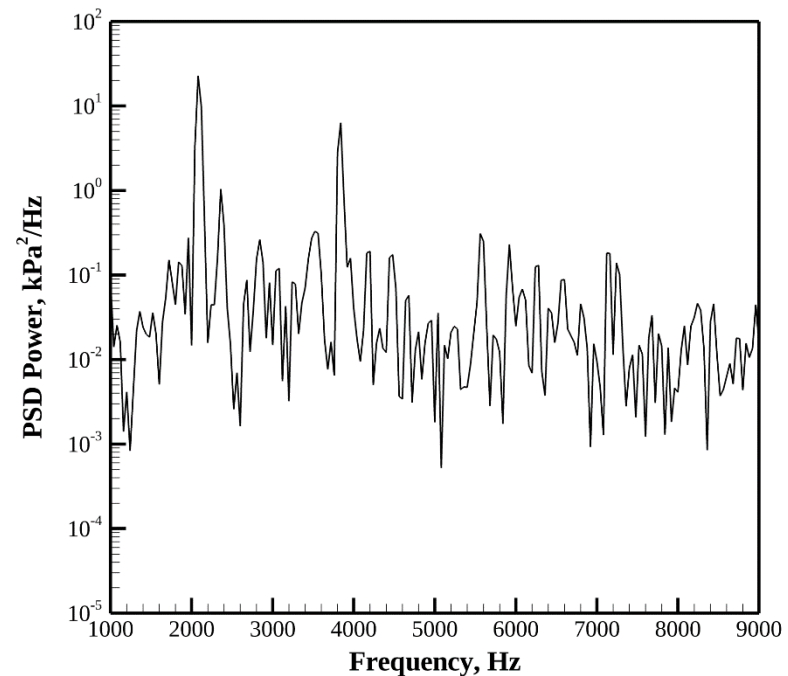


Unstable



Bifurcated second harmonic,  
the frequency is less than the  
twice the first mode frequency

Stable

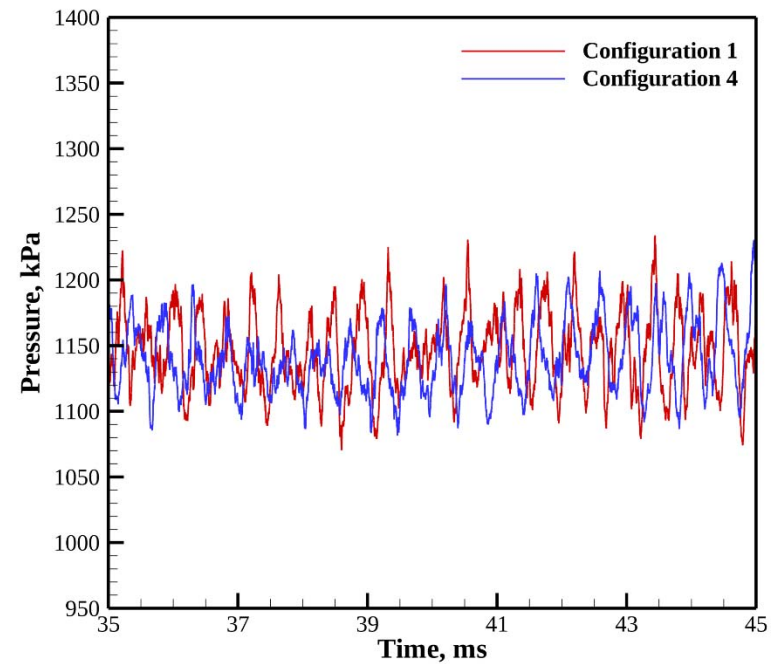
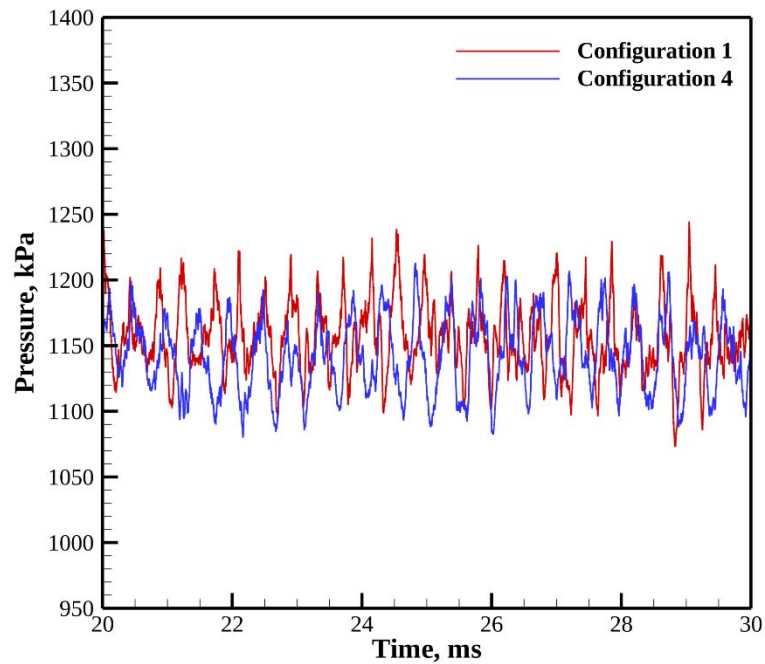


Well defined second harmonic  
at twice the first mode  
frequency





# Chamber Center, Pressure



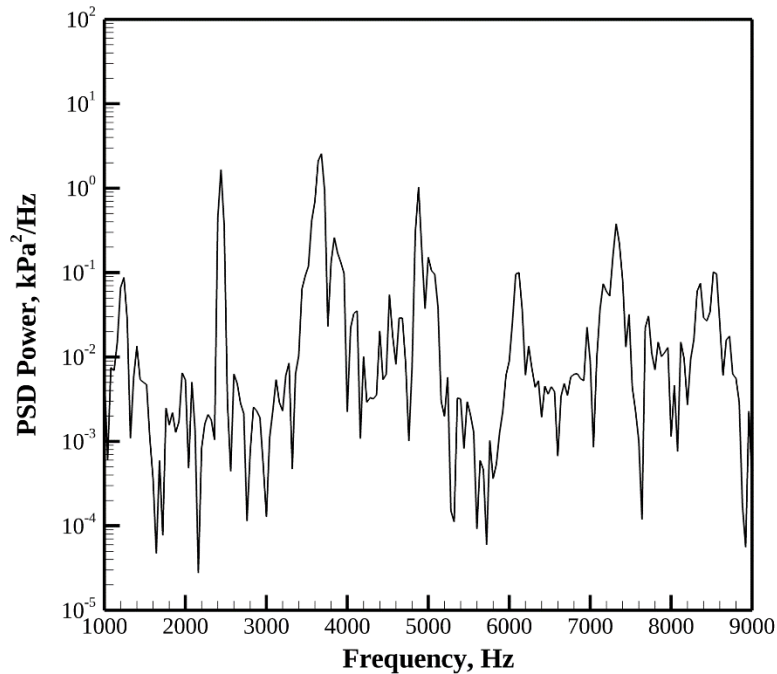
Lower amplitudes compared with the side wall, consistent with a pressure node of the 1W mode.



# Chamber Center, PSD

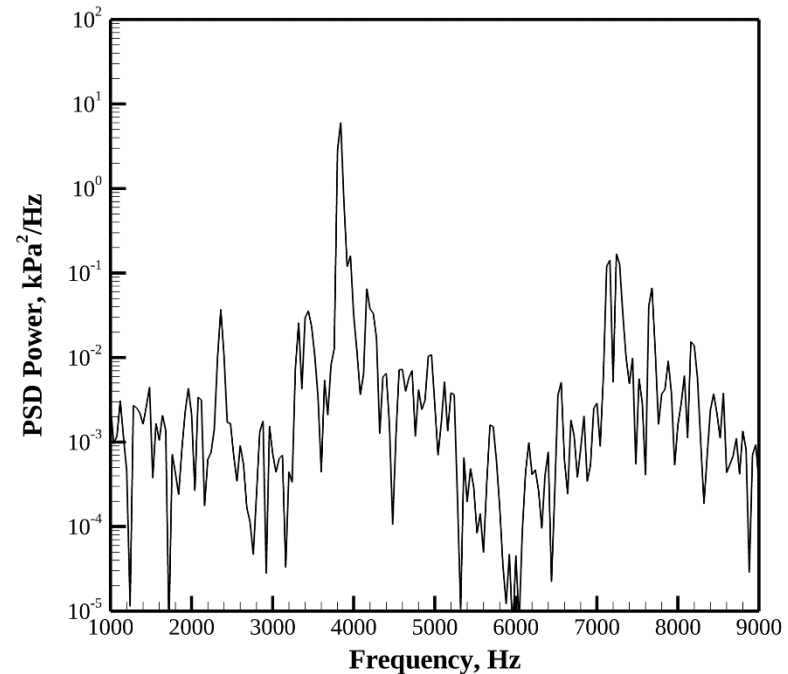


Unstable



Excited 1W and 2W, not consistent with a transverse mode

Stable



Excited 2W, consistent with a transverse mode



# PSD Summary



	Experiment	Simulation
Configuration 1		
1W Frequency, Hz	2032	2440
$p'$ , kPa	620	259
$p_c$ , kPa	965	1148
$p'/p_c$	65%	23%
Configuration 4		
1W Frequency, Hz	1855	2080
$p'$ , kPa	70	139
$p_c$ , kPa	815	1139
$p'/p_c$	8%	12%

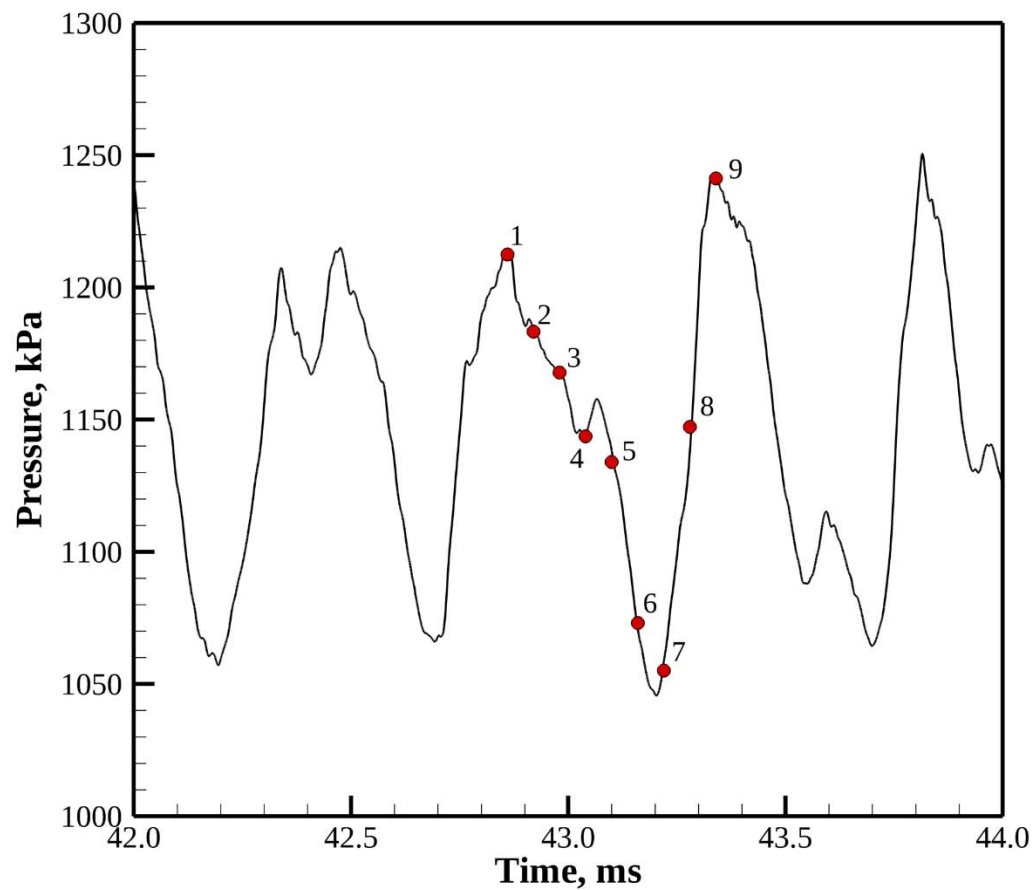
Predicted amplitude for the unstable case is too low, PSD analysis indicates that it may not be a transverse instability

Amplitude prediction for the stable case is of the same order of magnitude.

In both cases the chamber pressure and frequency are too high



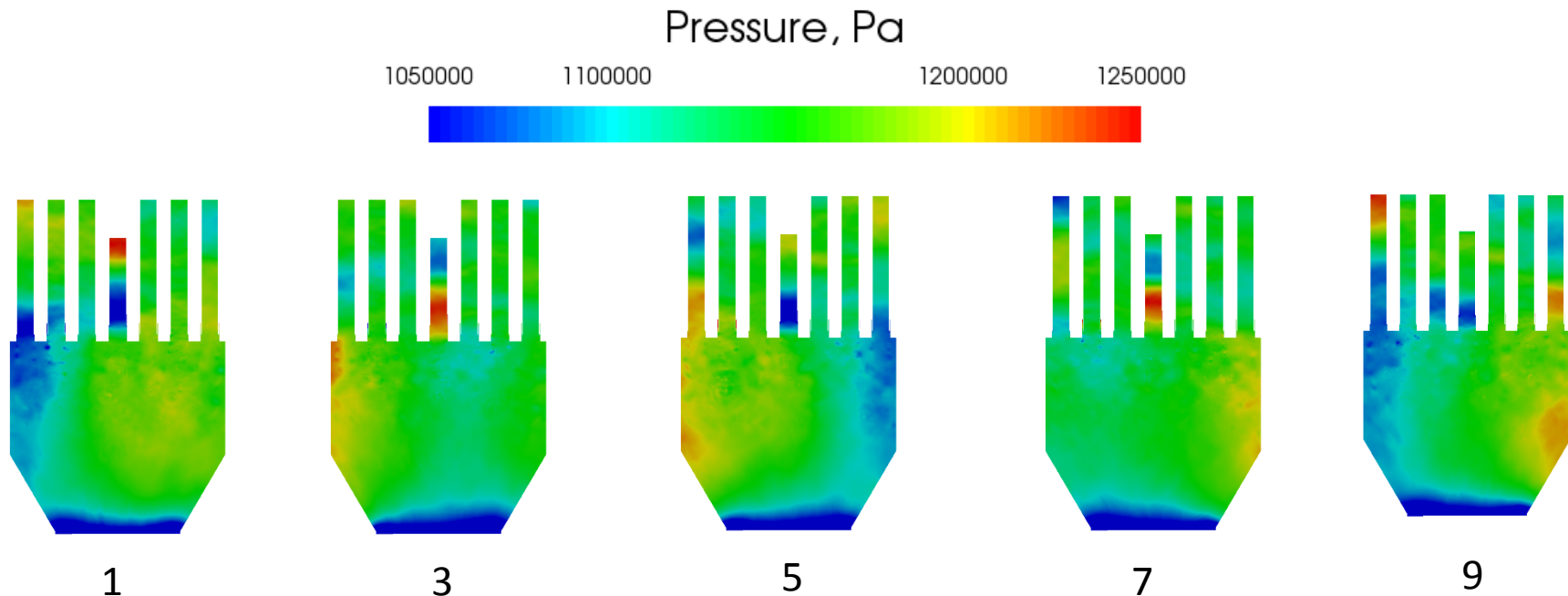
# Stable Configuration



Point of analysis for a single representative cycle



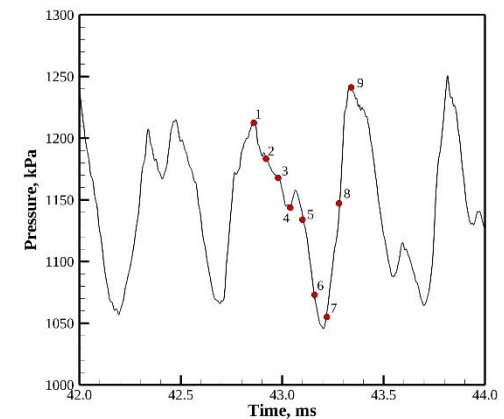
# Unsteady Pressure



Transverse mode in the chamber

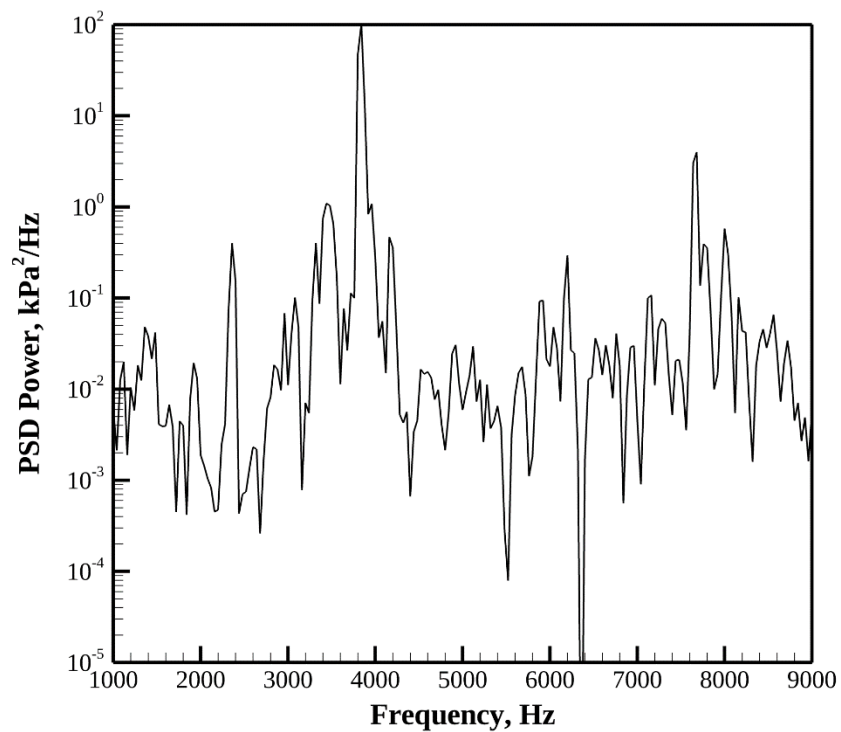
Longitudinal modes are setup in the injectors

Center element (located at 1W node) shows excitation





# Center Element PSD

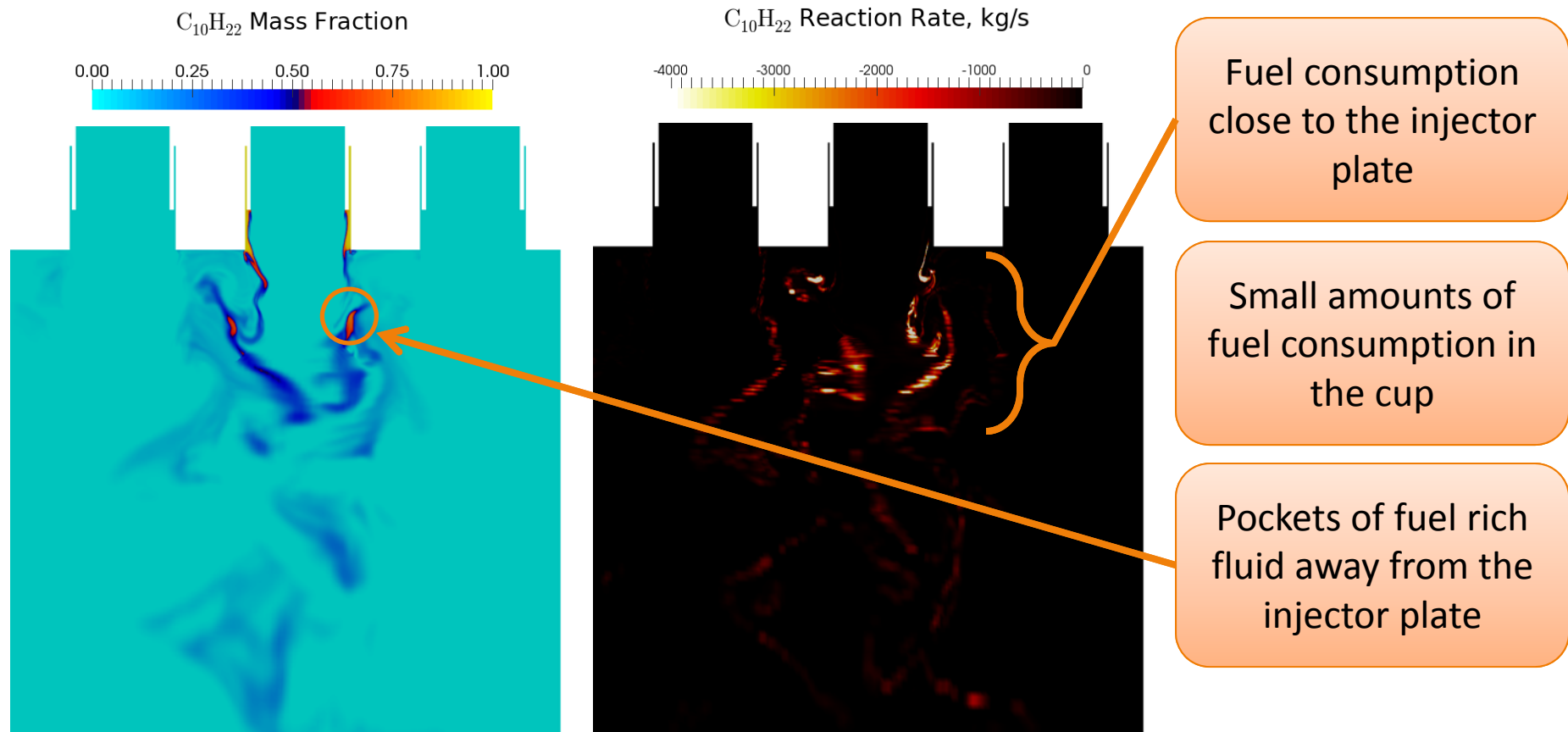


The center element is responding to the 2W frequency.

The amplitude of the response is larger than the 2W response in the chamber



# Driving Elements

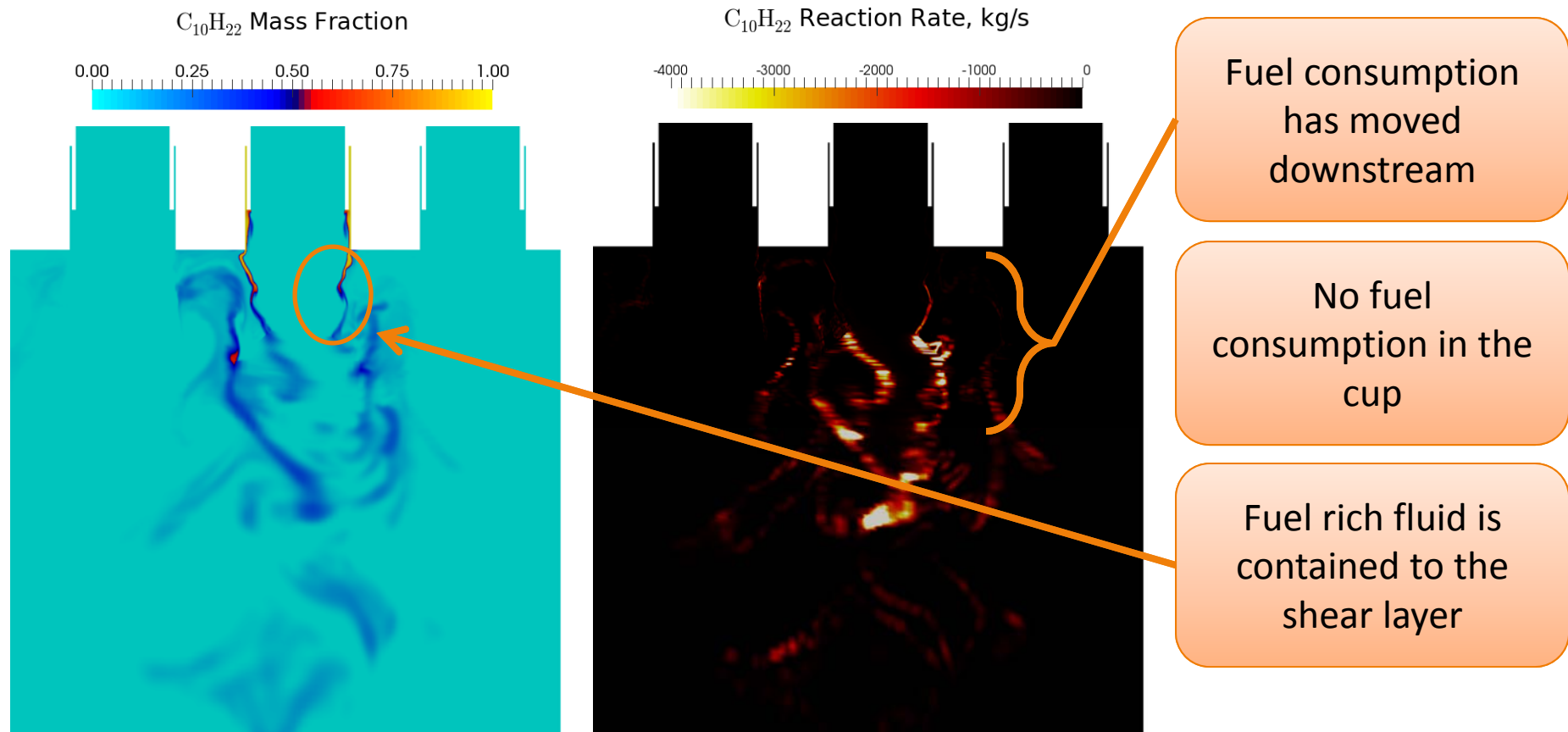


Time 5 – low pressure on the right side of the chamber





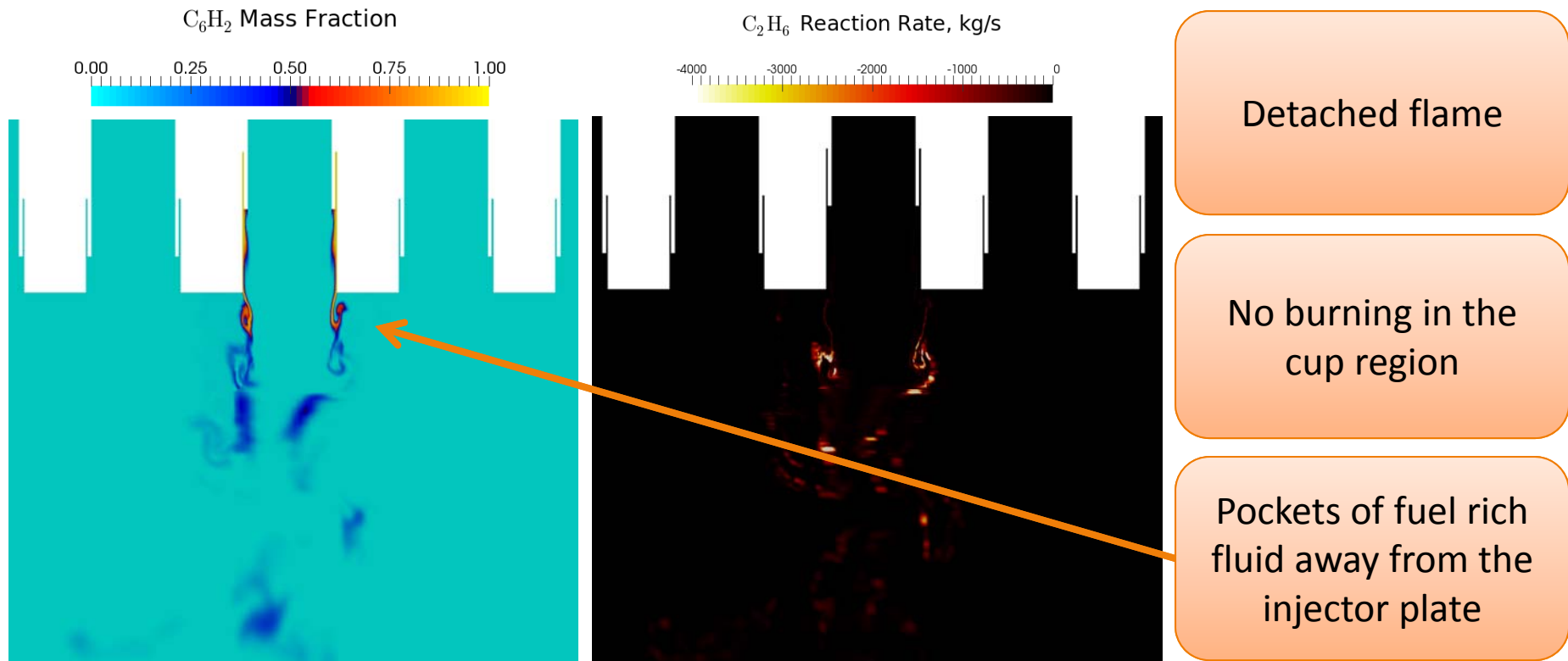
# Driving Elements



Time 8 – high pressure on the right side of the chamber



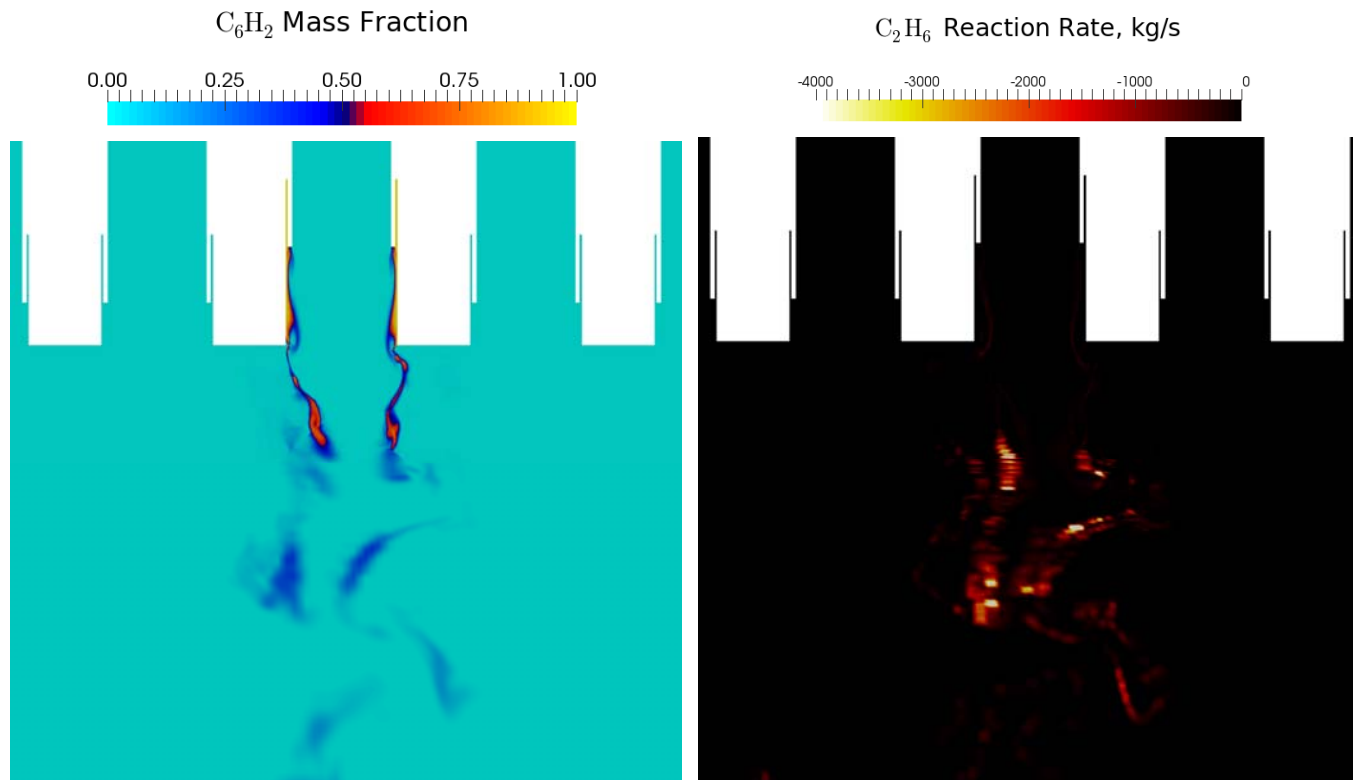
# Study Element



Time 5 – low pressure in the center element



# Study Element



Flame remains detached

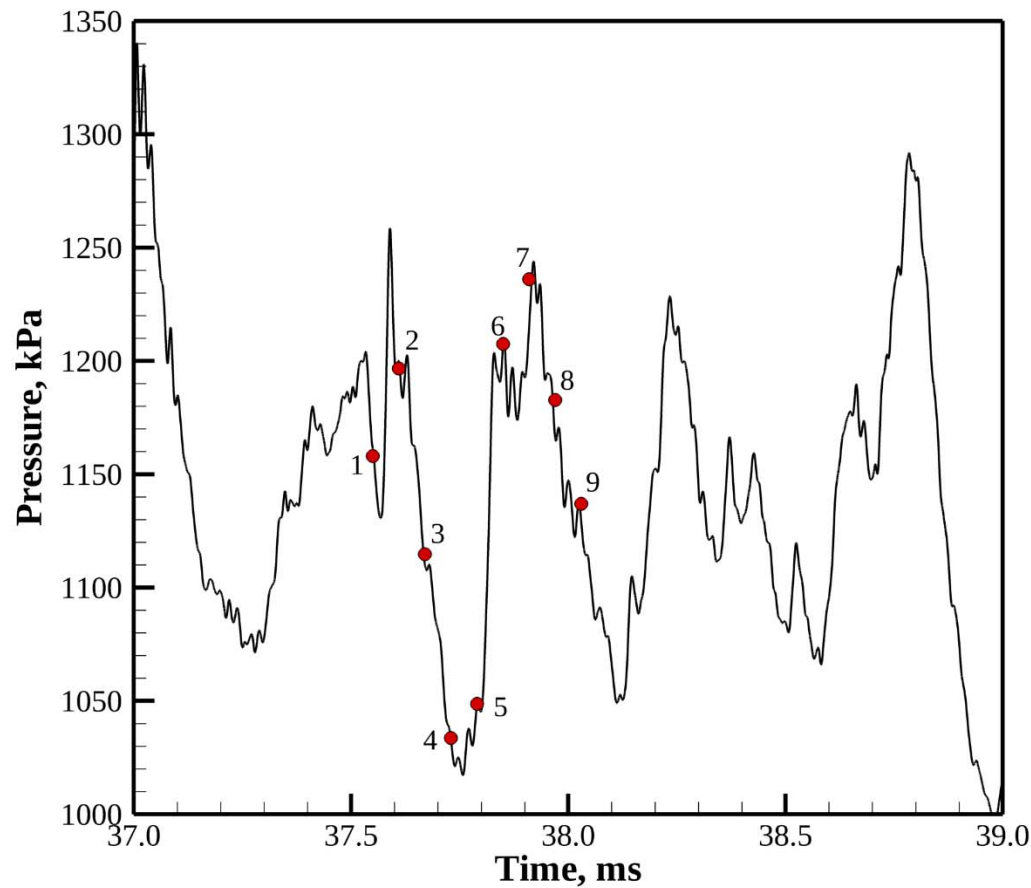
No burning in the cup region (unlike single element studies)

Pockets of fuel rich fluid away from the injector plate remain

Time 7 – high pressure in the center element



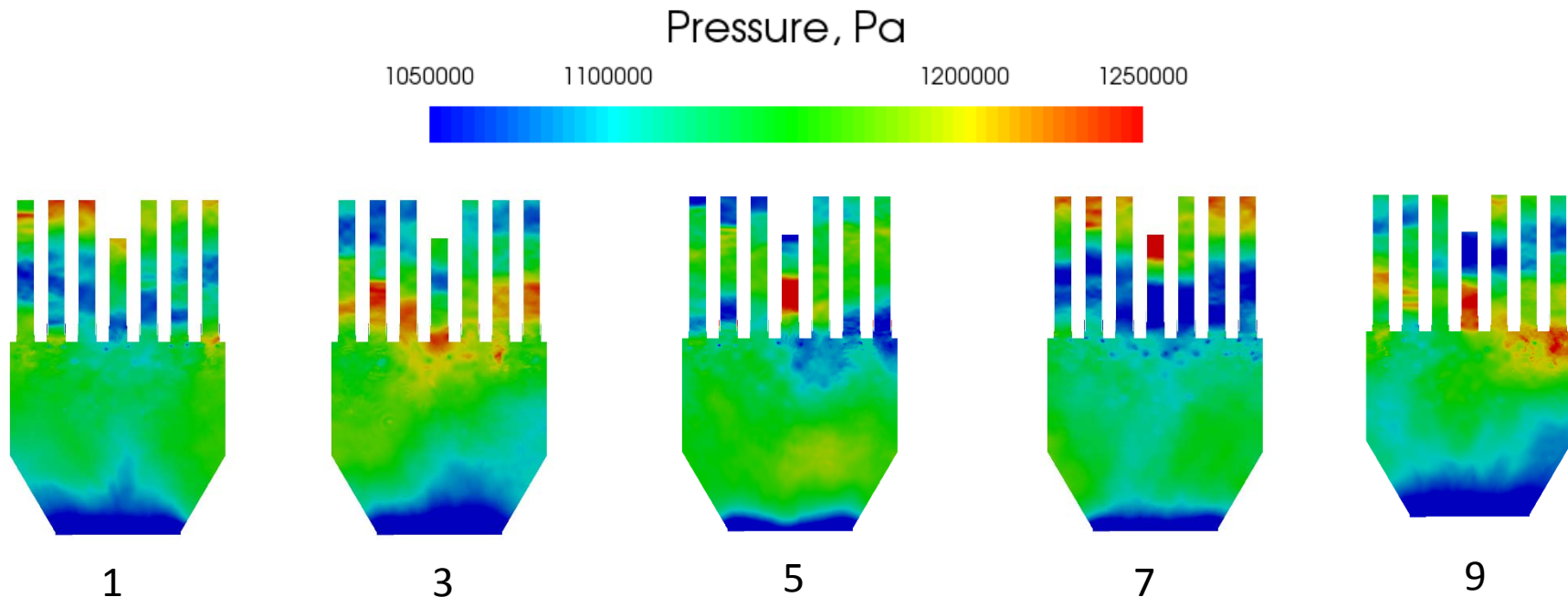
# Unstable Configuration



Point of analysis for a single representative cycle

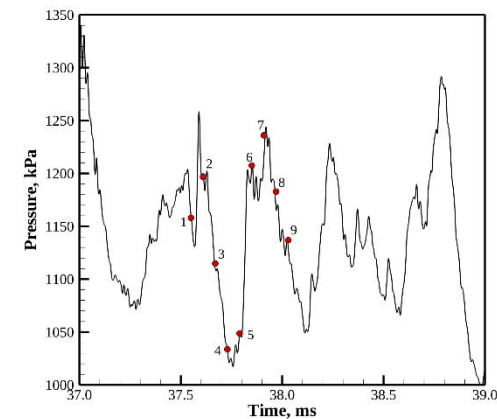


# Unsteady Pressure



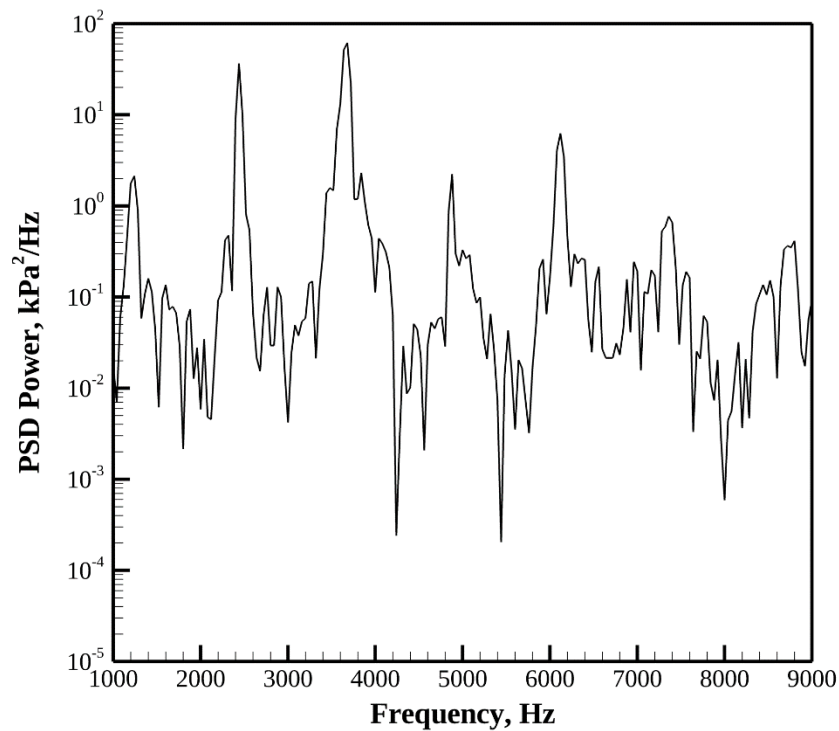
Weak transverse mode in the chamber (near the injector plate only)

All injector elements are excited





# Center Element PSD

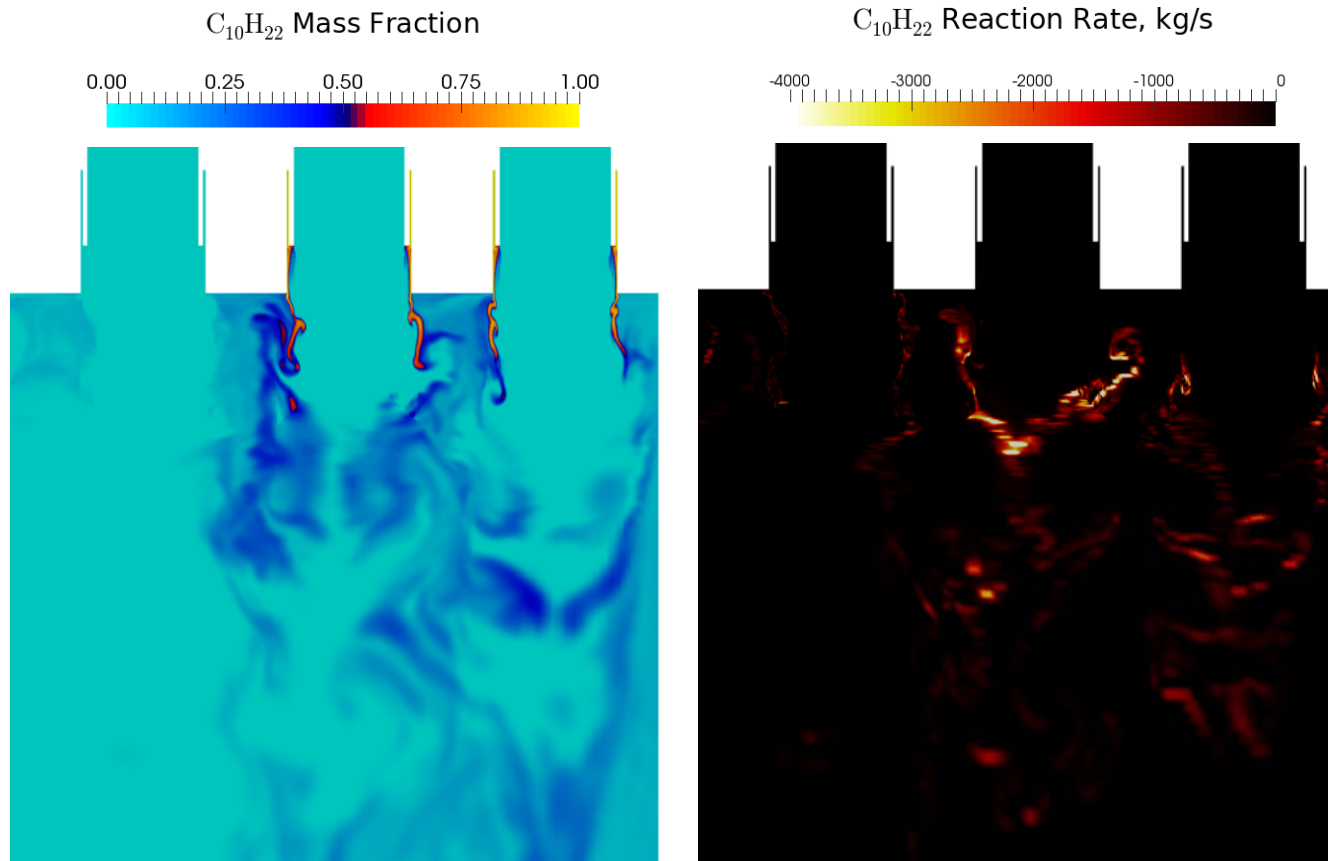


The center element is responding to the 1W and 2W frequencies.

The amplitude of the response is larger than the 1W and 2W responses in the chamber



# Driving Elements



Consumption rates  
of the two driving  
injectors is different

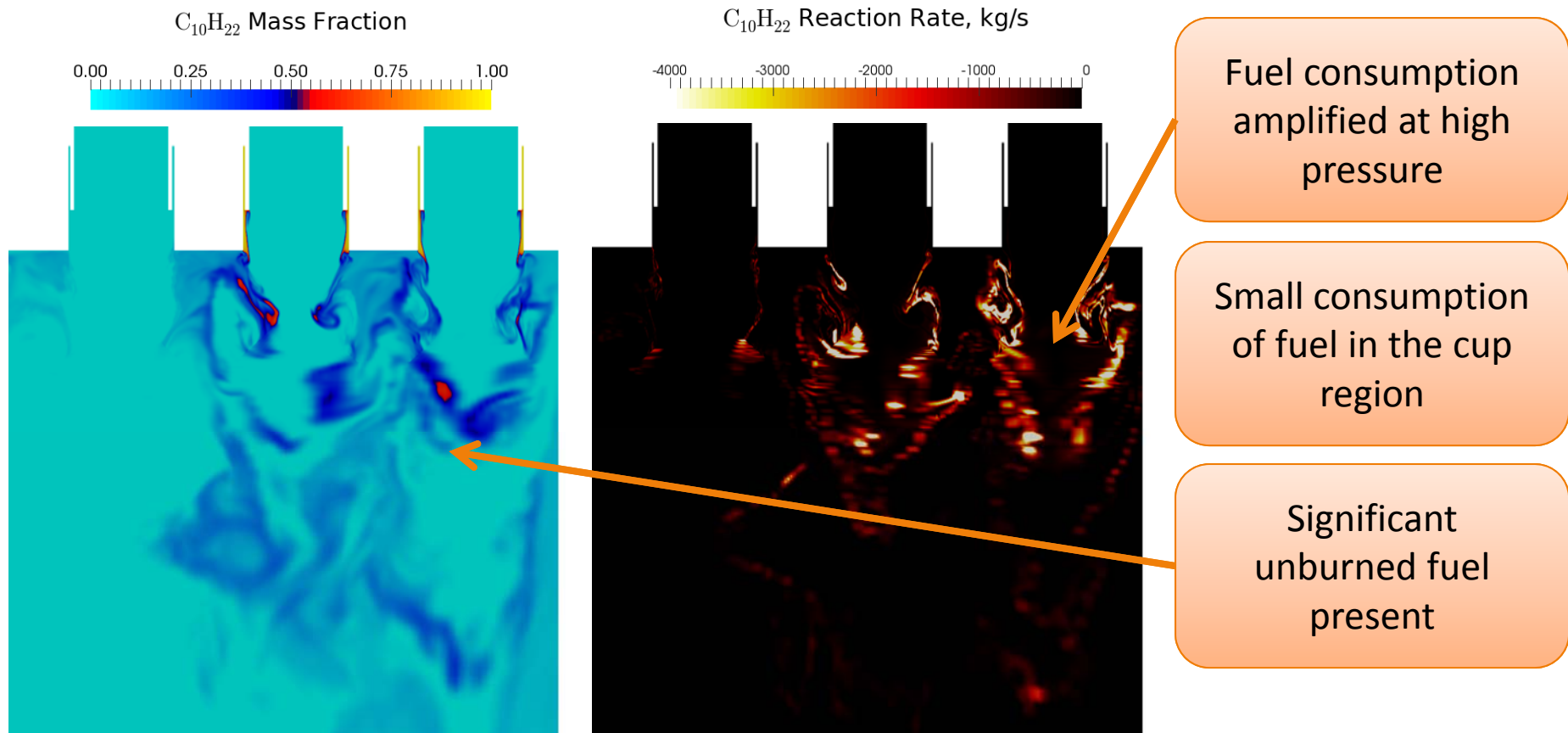
Larger quantities of  
fuel are present in  
the outside injector

Time 5 – low pressure on the right side of the chamber





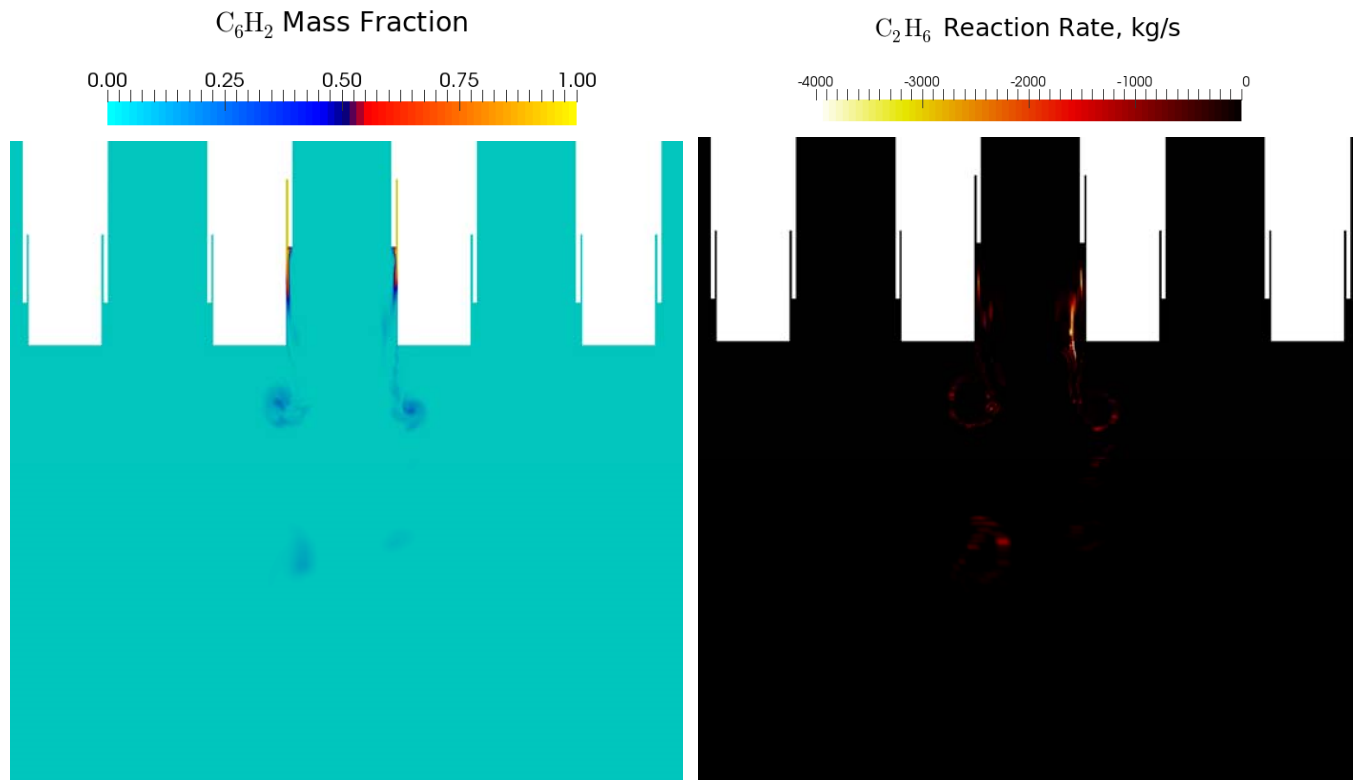
# Driving Elements



Time 9 – high pressure on the right side of the chamber



# Study Element



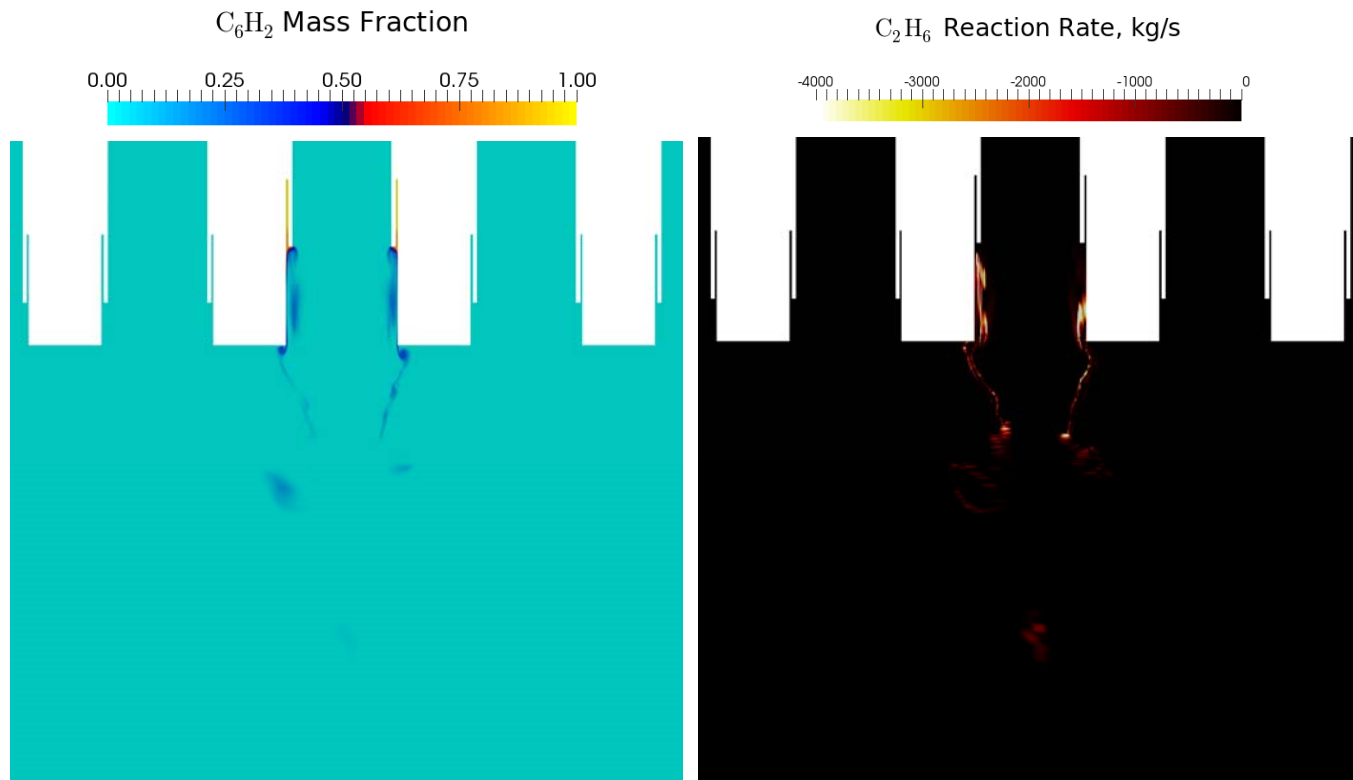
Burning inside the  
cup region

Very little fuel  
present the  
combustor

Time 6 – low pressure in the center element



# Study Element



Majority of burning is inside the cup

Very little fuel present the combustor

Very different from case 4 which showed a detached flame

Time 4 – high pressure in the center element



# Summary



- **Reasonable agreement between the experiment and simulation for the stable case**
  - Different injector response mechanism than was observed in single element studies
- **Unstable configuration did not have a good agreement**
  - Lack of a transverse wave
- **Very different behavior of the center element for the two cases**
  - Case 1 – burning in the cup, responding to 1W and 2W mode
  - Case 4 – detached flame, responding to the 2W mode



# Summary



- **Instability mechanism present in the single element longitudinal studies were not present in either case.**
- **Future Work, Look at:**
  - Ideal gas assumption for RP1
  - Grid resolution, flame was further downstream from the injector than single element studies, the grid may have been too coarse in that region